

Agenda Item 9.2.1: Sustainability Plan – SPREPs Programme of Support for Protected Areas

Purpose of paper

1. To seek endorsement of the Sustainability Plan for SPREPs Programme of Support for Protected Areas (SPREP-PA).
2. To seek Members' commitment to the SPREP-PA Sustainability Plan, particularly the plans' recommendations, as a matter of urgency for protected and conserved areas work for the Pacific Region.

Background

1.1 Background

3. The Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management (BIOPAMA) programme is an initiative of the Organisation of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (OACPS) Group of States funded by the 11th European Development Fund. The programme aims to assist Pacific ACP countries in developing a framework for improving technical and institutional approaches to conserve biodiversity, particularly in protected areas, through regional cooperation and capacity building activities. The project has seen an investment of USD 7.5 million come to the protected and conserved areas in the region
4. In recognition of its mandate, SPREP is the regional BIOPAMA implementing partner for the Pacific, in collaboration with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (EC-JRC).
5. Since 2014, the BIOPAMA programme has supported SPREP to fulfil its mandate, specifically through providing assistance to SPREPs Regional Programme of Support for Protected Areas (SPREP-PA), which provides backstopping services on protected area planning, management and decision-making. The SPREP-PA operates and implements the activities of the Pacific BIOPAMA Regional Observatory (Pacific RO).
6. The interface of the *SPREP-PA / Pacific RO* is the Pacific Islands Protected Area Portal (PIPAP), which also functions as the BIOPAMA Regional Reference Information System (RRIS). The PIPAP facilitates exchange of data and information among decision makers and managers of protected areas and supports regional priorities for decision support products. One such product is the regional "State of Protected and Conserved Areas" (SoPACA) report which is being developed in support of Pacific island countries in 2021.

7. To date, the project has trained 479 government and NGO practitioners, over 185,000 users of the decision-making support portal (Pacific Islands Protected Area Portal) and 12% of protected areas in the region adopting decision making tools through the project.
8. With the current phase of BIOPAMA culminating in mid-2023, SPREP would like to develop a clear pathway and business plan for continuing and further developing its role as a protected areas decision-making support hub in the region, in a way that meets the needs of member countries and other partners. It is intended that the SPREP-PA will continue functioning beyond the end of the BIOPAMA programme.
9. Therefore, the work within the remaining years of the BIOPAMA programme is to ensure that this is so. Sustainability of the SPREP-PA is a means to continue to function and deliver benefits to the primary target audiences after the funding from BIOPAMA comes to an end.

1.2 Main components of the SPREP-PA Sustainability Plan

10. The Sustainability Plan (refer WP9.2.1/Att.1) was developed through a BIOPAMA consultancy engaging Global Environment Consulting Pty Ltd (David Sheppard). The Plan features proposals for effective programmatic, institutional and financial sustainability, aiming to sustain the SPREP-PA for at least the next 10 years. The plan includes the following:
 - **a Staffing plan** to meet the requirements outlined in the situational context.
 - **a Budget** for maintenance and development of the SPREP-PA, including tool and knowledge products development, capacity development and staffing needs.
 - **a Strategic plan** to meet the budget outlined (e.g. member state contributions, donor funding, institutional funding, etc.) and steps to achieve this.
 - **a communications plan** to engage with relevant stakeholders that will contribute to the programmatic content (data, tools, knowledge products, capacity development etc) and financing of the SPREP-PA / Pacific RO (links to point above on strategic plan)
 - **a set of recommendations** around the tools and support services needed by beneficiaries of the SPREP-PA / Pacific RO to better assist them to achieve their work-related objectives.
 - **a Monitoring and reporting framework** to enable effective tracking of the strategic plan.
 - **a plan for exploring new partnerships and identifying potential opportunities** to be tapped into.
11. The full Plan can be found at : <https://library.sprep.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/sustainability-plan-SPREP-regional-protected-areas.pdf>

Recommendation

12. The Executive Board Meeting is invited to:
 - 1) **Endorse** the Sustainability Plan for SPREPs Programme of Support for Protected Areas (SPREP-PA)
 - 2) **Encourage** Members and Partners to commit to, and support the implementation of the Plan;
 - 3) **Direct** the Secretariat to prioritise donor engagement to encourage support to allow for the continued operation of SPREP-PA and implementation of the sustainability plan; and
 - 4) **Direct** the Secretariat to support implementation of the Plan by Members.